

Unit 12: Resources

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will

Be aware of the following

- Necessity of obtaining accurate sources for Middle East culture/religion issues
- Top twelve resources for Middle East religions/cultures
- Importance of history, biography, autobiography, and novels as sources of cultural understanding
- Helpful Internet sources of information

Identify

- U.S. Department of State WWW site
- LingNet
- Unofficial Civil Affairs WWW Homepage

Realize

- Discernment of sources--choosing the right ones--is most helpful in obtaining Middle East religion/culture information
- Importance of the WWW State Department site for timely, accurate information
- Helpfulness of The Multifaith Calendar and CIA Middle East Atlas
- Extent of Department of the Army Pam 550 Country Studies Series

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"The study of Islam fills libraries and consumes lifetimes."

--Middle East Orientation Course, USAF, p. 60.

I. Necessity of Discernment

One difficulty in studying Middle Eastern religions and their impact on a culture is the sheer amount of information available. Titles abound. Card catalogs and on-line directories overwhelm with their listings.

Questions arise. What is the accuracy of material presented? What is the author's slant and purpose? How can the text assist my purposes? How accessible is the information presented? What are the accurate sources?



This section delineates an annotated bibliography. It first lists the top twelve resources. Next, it specifies books (history, autobiography, novel) which assist in capturing a feel for the culture of the Middle East--its geography, world view, historical themes, life of its peoples. Then, this section presents assets available at local libraries and learning resource centers. A small list of helpful tools available outside the Peninsula is then inventoried. Finally, there is a limited treatment of helpful Internet locations.

II. The Top Twelve Resources

1. The World Wide Web State Department site should be the first location serious students tap for information on culture/religion.

Site: U.S. Department of State

URL: gopher://gopher.state.gov...

By far, this site is the best up-to-date resource for country studies. Go first to this location to find background studies on countries of the Middle East.

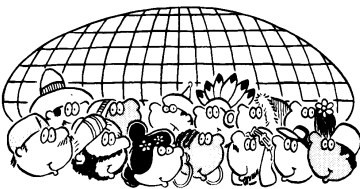
Reports given by the State Department are exhaustive yet well-organized, made for easy skimming. Plus, for military linguists, the information presented is accurate, reflecting current U.S. government perspectives and assessments.

Of special interest are the following headings:

- 1995 Patterns of Global Terrorism. Offerings include area as well as specific country listings.
- Country Studies.
- Travel Advisories. Up-to-the-minute presentations of critical information for the prospective traveler.
- Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1996. Just released (30 Jan 97), these reports analyze the current state of human rights. The Saudi Arabia report comprised 15 single-spaced pages.

The following books and calendar resource are general tools which give great assistance. Most are reasonably priced and readily available.

2. Spence, David, The Multifaith Calendar, Burnaby, British Columbia: Hemlock Printers, 1995.



Every linguist needs this helpful, accurate, and informative calendar.

Artistically done, the calendar not only lists significant events on days when they occur, but also explains their importance as a monthly aside. Individual copies of the calendar, at \$11.00 each, can be ordered from Multifaith Resources, P.O. Box 128, Wofford Heights, Calif. 93285.

3. Country Studies, (various authors and editors), Headquarters, Department of the Army, DA Pam 550 series.

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Exhaustive studies of various countries around the world. Sometimes the information is a bit dated, depending on the edition. Also, quality of assessment varies from study to study. The authors give a thorough history and some insight on practice of religion in the country studied. Available at Aiso Library and the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) office, building 274. The FAO office also has an excellent catalog of most recent "reports from the field," the back briefings of FAO visits.

4. Wilson, Richard A., Arab Customs and Culture, 2D Edition, MI Company, 5th Special Forces Group (ABN), Fort Bragg, NC 28307.

This compact resource (25 pages) gives an excellent overview of Arab manners, customs, and gestures. The booklet is not readily distributed. Instructors in SMA and SMB schools may have copies available for reproduction or handout.

5. Cultural Notes, Saudi-Arabic Headstart. (AN 00505)

As part of DLIFLC's Headstart series, this section of the Saudi-Arabic package contains 40 pages of helpful, practical information. The text treats practical tips, dos and taboos and customs geared to the military audience. Aiso Library has copies of the complete series. Copy off needed information from the Cultural Notes section.

6. Understanding Islam and the Muslims, Islamic Affairs Department, Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC.

This booklet, artistically done with pictures and text, breaks many stereotyped notions we may have concerning Islam. It is available for free distribution from The Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Department of Islamic Affairs, 601 New Hampshire Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, phone # (202) 342-3700.

7. Nydell, Margaret, Understanding Arabs, (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1987).

Perhaps the best single source for dealing with Middle East people. The author deals with tension producing areas, not just the easy issues. Intercultural press just published a new, revised edition (1996). (Aiso Library)

8. Speight, R. Marston, God is One: The Way of Islam, (New York: Friendship Press, 1989), ISBN: 0-377-00196-1.

Published under the imprint of the National Council of Churches, this work gives a sensitive treatment of Islamic belief, practice and present issues. The author writes with a Christian audience in mind.

9. MacDonald, Margaret Read, The Folklore of World Holidays, Detroit, Mich: Gale Research, Inc., 1994.



The only thing bad about this research guide is its price--\$80.00. It is filled with data on religious and cultural festivals around the world. A day-by-day listing of events around the world is given. Each entry is detailed enough to be thorough and interesting. Author lists sources of information after each entry. ISBN 0-8103-7577-X. (Aiso Library)

10. Smith, Huston, The Illustrated World's Religions, New York: HarperCollins, 1994.

The aesthetic beauty of this book pleases the senses. With most of the same text as Huston Smith's classic, The World's Religions, the art work and photos of worshippers around the world make this an especially appealing work. Price for the hardcover is \$30.00. If you can't afford it, get Smith's The World's Religions for \$12.00. This is the most readable of all the general texts I've read. (Aiso has The World's Religions)

11. Famighetti, Robert, ed., The World Almanac and Book of Facts, Mahwah, New Jersey: Funk and Wagnalls, 1996.

Up-to-date and packed with information, this resource tool is compact and reasonable. The statistics and country history sections are invaluable. Purchase this book at almost any news/bookstore for under \$10.00. Don't settle for other publishers. The World Almanac gives data on country communications (phones, radios, newspapers per person) as well as health and economic indicators.

12. Central Intelligence Agency, Atlas of the Middle East, (CPAS 93-10001, JUN 1993). Available for U.S. Government officials through their own CIA liaison channels or for purchase from:

- Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9325, phone (202) 783-3238 or
- National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161, phone (703) 487-4630 or
- Document Expediting (DOCEX) Project, Exchange and Gift Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540-4200, phone (202) 707-9527.



III. Resources Promoting Cultural Appreciation

- Thesiger, Wilfred, The Last Nomad, Dutton Publishers, 1981.

This autobiographical account describes the author's travels in the Arabian Peninsula from 1945 to 1978. Few resources give a better understanding of the desert Bedouin approach to life. The author bemoans the influx of oil money and the resultant lack of contentment now felt by traditional peoples of the peninsula. A more recent work by Wilfred Thesiger is Life of My Choice, describing his Middle East and African explorations/wanderings.

- Pagonis, William G., Moving Mountains, (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School, 1992).

Lieutenant General Gus Pagonis, chief Allied logistician of Desert Storm/Shield/Farewell, offers an on the ground perspective of events during the conflict. Lt. Gen. Pagonis relates many accounts of how culturally sensitive soldiers assisted in day-to-day operations. (Chamberlin Library)

- Khaled bin Sultan, Desert Warrior, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

This work, by the Saudi Arabian Joint Commander of Desert Storm, balances out General Sachwarzkopf's It Doesn't Take a

Hero. General Khalid intersperses cultural insights helpful for sensitizing Western audiences. (NPS).

- Schwarzkopf, H. Norman, It Doesn't Take a Hero, (New York: Bantam, 1992).

Portions of this autobiography stress the necessity of cultural awareness by commanders and all military personnel engaged in conflicts.



- Moorehead, Alan, The White Nile, (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1971).

This graphic history of early exploration of the Nile River excites the imagination. In reading this work, one cannot help but develop an appreciation for the history, geography, and peoples of Egypt, the Sudan, and Central Africa. A companion volume, The Blue Nile, describes historical action along the Nile within present day Ethiopia.

- Miller, Judith, God Has Ninety-Nine Names, New York: Simon and Shuster, 1996.

For an up-to-date look at the climate of a militant Middle East, few works top this book. The author, Cairo bureau chief for The New York Times, draws extensively on her travels and experiences in the region since 1971. Chapters discuss specific countries, paying special attention to three groups: Christians and other non-Muslim minorities; intellectuals; and women. (Monterey Institute of International Studies)

- Juergensmeyer, Mark, The New Cold War, Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.



Now out in paperback, this text analyzes the underlying religious motives behind most major present day conflicts. Excellent for bringing one up-to-date on the religious fundamentalist movements (which the author describes as religious nationalism) around the world. ISBN 0-520-08651-1.

- Kimball, Charles, Striving Together (A Way Forward in Christian-Muslim Relations), Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991.

The author, one of the negotiators during the Iranian hostage crisis, treats subjects which fosters positive Christian-Muslim relations.

- Alexander, Pat, ed., Eerdmans' Handbook to the World's Religions, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1994).

Good pictures and graphs from a variety of sources. For students interested in a Christian approach to world religions, the section on Christianity provides helpful insight.

IV. Locally Available Resources

- The New York Times.

Few resources can match The New York Times for information and analysis of Middle East events. Aiso Library subscribes to the Sunday edition. Naval Postgraduate School's Bosun Library carries a complete microfilm storage of past issues.

- The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an, translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, with commentary and index, Beltsville, Maryland: Amana Publications, 1995.

This Arabic and English edition of the Holy Qur'an is a compact, helpful edition. The commentary and index provides useful aids for understanding the Qur'an. ISBN 0-915957-55-8. This edition is available through Army supply channels, number 9925-01-353-8791 01054, SP 0450-95-C-1376.

- Cultural Orientation Program for Exercises: Jordan, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Presidio of Monterey, California, 93944-5006, 1990.

Though geared to Jordan, much of the material included in this training aid (developed for the Third U.S. Army) applies to many Middle Eastern countries. The cultural notes interspersed throughout the 168 pages of text are extremely helpful. Availability is a problem. Some SMA, SMB department chairs may have copies in their personal resource libraries.

- Middle East Orientation Course, (AD00020T0), United States Special Operations School.

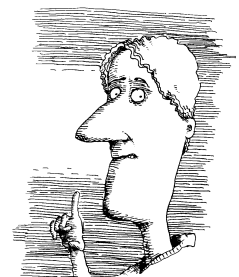
Though loosely organized, this training tool gives excellent information on customs and cultures specifically geared to the military audience. Some excellent interviews with Middle East armed forces personnel give valuable insight. Again, availability is a problem.

- Skabelund, Grant, Culturgrams, Volumes I and II, Garrett Park, Maryland: Garrett Park Press, 1996.

These volumes give the background, people, customs and courtesies, lifestyle, and society traits of 150 countries. Four pages are given to each country. These background studies are succinct and have a reputation for reliability and accuracy. Non-profit groups can purchase both volumes for \$35.00 each. ISBN 0-912048-86-7 (for set).

- Smith, Jonathan, ed., The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion, New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Readable, well-organized, and thorough (1,152 pages), this book is a "must have." Especially helpful is the user-friendly pronunciation guide. ISBN 0-06-067515-2.



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- Barrett, David, B. ed., The World Christian Encyclopedia, 3 Volumes, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

This is a new revision of a standard reference tool first published in 1982. For detailed facts and figures on all religions within various countries, this is the place to look. ISBN 0-19-507963-9. The Monterey Public Library has the older edition.

- Eliade, Mircea, The Encyclopedia of Religion, 16 Volumes, New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1993.

Newly revised, this is the standard reference work on world religions. Practically every aspect of religion in the world is dealt with by a knowledgeable scholar. Monterey Public Library has the older edition.

- Levinson, David, ed., Encyclopedia of World Cultures, Boston: G.K. Hall, 1996.

For detailed analysis of over three thousand world cultures, this can be your primary resource. Recently printed, the work incorporates the information found in the old, more cumbersome, Human Relations Area Files gathered by Yale University. 13 editors, 800 contributors, and 20 translators worked over 10 years to put this massive work together.

Each culture has an extensive religion and expressive culture section. Beliefs, practitioners, ceremonies, arts, medicine and death/afterlife sections comprise the heading under religion.



Cost is high (\$800.00 for ten volumes), but nothing more detailed exists in the mass publishing market. Aiso Library has all but the Middle East volume (on order). Naval Postgraduate School (Bosun) has the set on order.

- Harris, Philip and Robert Moran, Managing Cultural Differences, Houston, Texas: Gulf Publications, 1991.

Outstanding text on cross-cultural communication from a business person's perspective. The authors give practical guidance for various regions of the world. (Aiso Library)

- Axtell, Roger, Gestures, The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1991.

This reasonably priced paperback gives great information and contains an excellent bibliography. The first half describes gestures--the most popular ones around the world. Then, in the second half, the text gives a by-country listing of tips helpful for intercultural communication. ISBN 0-471-53672-5. Price is under \$15.00.

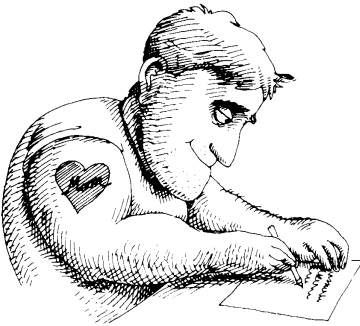
- Mead, Richard, International Management, Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1994.

Great text designed for business and government workers working in cross-cultural settings. Gives the theoretical background of leadership practices and differences around the world. Very helpful for units working with other Allied armies on military to military or peace operations.

- Alexander, Pat, ed., Eerdmans' Handbook to the World's Religions, Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1994.

This was the text recommended at our Chaplain's Advanced Course. The editors gathered excellent pictures, articles, and charts. I never did find the text user friendly. It seems difficult to get the complete, precise picture of the religions presented.

- Harris, Ian ed., Longman Guide to Living Religions, Essex, UK: Longman Group, 1994.



This concise text details the impact of religion on politics in a country-by-country rundown throughout the world. For its purpose, there is nothing better. Unfortunately, its price (\$75.00) makes it prohibitive for personal libraries.

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- Randal, Gary and Dinah Hanlon, Religions on File, New York: Facts on File, 1990.

Excellent resource for charts, graphs, and sketches which will add visual appeal and stimulation to classes and briefings. Some libraries purchase a reproduction certificate with the text, enabling users to run off multiple copies of documents given. The \$155.00 price makes it prohibitive for small libraries.

- Country Profiles, Economist Intelligence Unit, London, UK: EIU, 1996.

Quarterly and yearly updates, in succinct, quickly read style, which dispatch current information on the country listed. Though dealing with economics and politics, religious parties are sometimes treated as a part of the analysis. Outside of the daily newspaper, this resource is the most up-to-date, in print product available. Due to its excessive price, no library on the Peninsula subscribes to this collection. Stanford may have it.

- Morrison, Terri, Wayne Conaway and George Borden, Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands, (Holbrook, Mass: Bob Adams, Inc., 1994).

Fresh insights, concisely organized, offer original perspectives on over 60 countries in the world. Middle East countries included are Egypt, Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. (Aiso Library)

V. WWW Sites

- Site: U.S. Department of State
Universal Resource Locator (URL):
gopher://gopher.state.gov:...

(See earlier listing under Top Twelve Resources).

- Site: LingNet - The Linguist's Network
URL: <http://lingnet.army.mil/>

Provided as a public service by our own Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, this site is dedicated to support the military linguist. LingNet's Language Resources page (URL: <http://lingnet.army.mil/general.htm>) links to an overwhelming amount of information and materials.

Included in the Resources page is an Area Background listing which includes:

- 1995 CIA factbook: Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook, 1995 edition
 - City.Net: a comprehensive guide to cities and countries around the world
 - The Electronic Embassy: Links to Embassies in Washington, DC
- Unofficial Civil Affairs page. (This site is a gold mine of information, provided you can connect.)
- UCLA's Language Materials Project: country and language information; sensitive map (click on a location, receive information about languages in that area).
 - US State Department Travel Advisories

Miscellaneous Sites:

"The Digital Middle East," an article in the Nov/Dec 1996 edition of Aramco World magazine gives photojournalist George Anzar's review of helpful Web sites currently available (Jan 97) on the Internet. I quote at length from this article. WWW sites referred to are ones I've personally found beneficial.

"For the cybernovice, the Internet has two main 'highways': The World Wide Web carries sound and graphics in addition to text; newsgroups on Usenet use text-only files, including electronic mail, or e-mail.

As a whole, the Internet--and particularly the Web--can seem like an enormous bazaar: The hawkers are many and the info-goods, at first glance, seem to address every imaginable need. However, as in any bazaar, let the browser beware.



While some sites are gems of useful information, smart design and clever insight, too many others offer virtual junk, information of doubtful value, sometimes presented with glitzy design and supplemented by meaningless, slow-loading graphics that can make your trip on the information superhighway more like creeping through a construction zone during rush hour.

The fact is that, behind the hype, the Internet still has some serious shortcomings. While it is relatively easy to access from home or work and its reach is indeed global, the information stream runs broad rather than deep. For in-depth learning, the Web and Usenet are still no matches for even an average library.

But hang onto your hats. Most sites have been around for only a year or less, and their numbers and the sophistication of their content are exploding. Given a bit of time, this could be quite a ride.

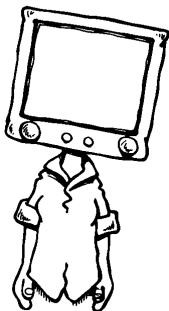
After sorting through...96 pages [electronic addresses accessed by search engines for keywords 'Arab, Middle East, Mideast and Islam']...

I came up with this brief guide to the best of the Arab and Islamic world. I've focused on the Web, as that is where most development is taking place, and I've listed sites to satisfy both the serious digital vagabond as well as the person who logs on for short strolls around the cyberblock." (p. 2)

- Site: CiAS (Centre d'Information Arabe Scandinave)
URL: <http://home.sn.no/~tkjeilen/>

"Encyclopedia Arabica is the only on-line encyclopedia of its kind. Though not at the level of Britannica or The Encyclopedia of Islam, it is a delight to use nonetheless."

- Site: University of Texas at Austin--Middle East Network Information Center
URL: <http://menic.utexas.edu/menic.html>



"In what may be the most extensive and well-linked of Middle East websites, UT-MENIC offers listings of all major on-line Middle East information sources...Links include Middle East country homepages, Middle East studies centers, associations, societies...and on and on."

- Site: AWAIR - Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services
URL: <http://www.telegraphave.com/gui/awairproductinfo.html>

"This nonprofit organization works mainly in schools to increase awareness of Arab and Islamic cultures. Here is a guide to a wide range of informative material especially valuable to teachers, including books, audio cassettes, puzzles, posters, videos, and curriculum aids."

- Site: Arabia.On.Line
URL: <http://www.arabia.com/>

"A nicely designed site featuring up-to-the-minute news and feature articles from the Middle East, as well as links to sites dealing with computing, religion, tourism, sports, shopping, governments, business, education, entertainment, health, art and culture."

- Site: The Arabic Newsstand
URL: <http://www.liii.com/~hajeri/newsstand/arab-news.html>

"Why walk to a newsstand and pay for an overseas periodical that, even with airmail delivery, is already way out of date? This site links you to 39 well-known newspapers, magazines and news services from the Middle East. Many are in Arabic; some are in English. Some require a form of subscription, via e-mail, to view full texts..."

- Site: Islamic Texts and Resources Meta Page
URL: <http://wings.buffalo.edu/student-life/sa/muslim/isl/isl.html>

"The Muslim Student Association at the State University of New York at Buffalo brings you this springboard for exploring texts and other resources on Islam, Islamic thought and ideas and related issues. The well-designed site contains an impressive number of articles on topics such as the pillars of Islam, ritual prayers in Islam, scriptures and prophetic traditions, Islamic thought, art resources...and more."

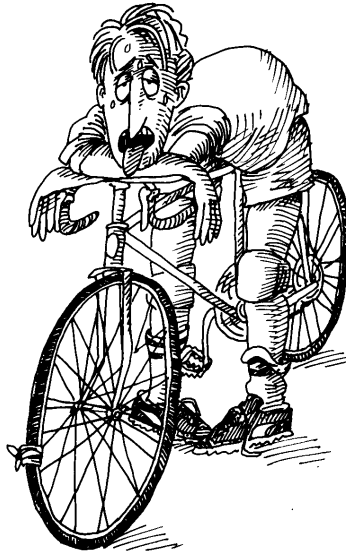
Other sites listed in the article include:

- Site: A Guide to Ancient Near East Astronomy
URL: <http://ccwf.cc.utexas.edu/%7Ehope/aneastro.html>
- Site: Al-Mashriq (definitive Lebanon site)
URL: <http://edmund.hiof.no/almashriq/>
- Site: Guardian's Egypt

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URL: <http://pages.prodigy.com/guardian/egypt.htm>

- Site: Virtual Middle Eastern Cookbook
URL: <http://value.net/~stoma/index.html>
- Site: Tony Belmonte's Historical Atlas of Europe and the Middle East
URL: <http://maps.lines.com/map.html>
- Site: The Ancient World Web Geography Index: The Middle and Near East
URL: http://atlantic.evsc.virginia.edu/julia/AW/geography/mid_east.html#syria
- Site: Arabview: The Internet Home of Independent Arab Opinions
URL: <http://www.arabview.com>



"Go the extra mile."